

## Message Text

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21

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

DODE-00 /030 W

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R 281145Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7336

INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 0173

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MOPS, PINR, GB, UR

SUBJ: SOVIET AIRCRAFT LANDS AT LIBREVILLE

1. SMALL INCIDENT HAS DEVELOPED AROUND HASTILY-ARRANGED LIBREVILLE LANDING BY SOVIET AIRPLANE JAN. 26. OVERFLIGHT AND LANDING CLEARANCE NOT REQUESTED BY USSR EMBASSY UNTIL SATURDAY AFTERNOON JAN. 24 WHEN FONMIN AND OTHER GOG OFFICES ALREADY CLOSED FOR WEEKEND. FLIGHT PLAN GIVEN AS NDJAMENA TO ACCRA WITH NO EXPLANATION FOR INDIRECT ROUTING BY LIBREVELLE OR REASON FOR REFUELING ON FLIGHT WITHIN AIRCRAFT'S NORMAL ENDURANCE. NATURAL GOG SUPPOSITION WAS THAT PLANE CARRYING OUT INTELLIGENCE GATHERING ACTIVITIES OR PROVIDING LOGISTIC SUPPORT TO SOVIET OPERATIONS IN ANGOLA.

2. WHILE LANDING AUTHORIZATION EVENTUALLY GRANTED, DECISION HAD TO BE MADE BY PRESIDENT BONGO PERSONALLY. PLANE, AN AN-30 WITH AEROFLOT MARKINGS, ARRIVED ON SCHEDULE JAN. 26TH. FONMIN OKUMBA TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT PLANE WAS BOARDED BY POLICE TO DETERMINE IF IT WAS CARRYING ARMS TO ANGOLA. WHILE NO ARMS FOUND ABOARD, OKUMBA REPORTED THAT AIRCRAFT CLEARLY A "SPY" PLANE FULL OF ELECTRONIC EQUIPMET. THIS ASSESSMENT SUPPORT BY AIRPORT OFFICIALS WHO TOLD EMBOFF THAT PLANE CARRIED CREW OF TWELVE TECHNICIANS.

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3. COMMENT: GABONESE CLEARLY UPSET BY INCIDENT WHICH

REENFORCES THEIR DEEP DISTRUST OF SOVIETS' PURPOSES IN  
CENTRALAFRICA. IN ADDITION, ALREADY POOR RELATIONS BETWEEN  
RUSSIAN EMBASSY AND FOREIGN MINISTRY UNDERWENT FURTHER STRAINS.  
NOT CLEAR FROM HERE WHY RUSSIANS REQUESTED LIBREVILLE LANDING  
IN VIEW POLITICAL COST AND FACT THAT SEVERAL BETTER  
ALTERNATIVES SEEMINGLY AVAILABLE TO SOVIET AIRCRAFT FOR ALMOST  
ANY CONCEIVABLE OPERATIONS IN THIS AREA.STEIGMAN

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION, MILITARY AIRCRAFT, AERIAL SURVEYS, FLIGHT CLEARANCES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 28 JAN 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** coburnhl  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976LIBREV00173  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** DG ALTERED  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760033-0062  
**From:** LIBREVILLE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19760114/aaaaalxj.tel  
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**Office:** ACTION AF  
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**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Subject:** SOVIET AIRCRAFT LANDS AT LIBREVILLE  
**TAGS:** MOPS, PINR, GB, UR  
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